

Reflections on May 2010 Internship Field-based Activities

As a practicing Director of Technology in La Vernia ISD, my Internship activities are naturally somewhat different from those of the typical student. After discussing the best course of action with Dr. Abernathy, we agreed that under the guidance of my Mentor, LVISD Superintendent Dr. Tom Harvey, I would pick tasks that I perform as a part of my duties, but examine them with a critical eye towards which ISTE Technology Facilitator (TF) Standards and Performance Indicator they address. Additionally, two separate, special technology tasks are designated as Internship Projects.

My Field-based Internship Activities in May consisted of ongoing work on the budget, reloading and updating my MacBook Pro primary management workstation to take advantage of new virtualization features and the latest productivity tools, attending curriculum management system training and operational systems training, attending the San Antonio Area Technology Director's Meeting, and planning and presenting our summer technology upgrades for the Leadership Team.

Almost every task I undertook this month hit one or more Performance Indicators under ISTE Standard TF-V, Productivity and Professional Practice, in which I apply technology to enhance and improve both my own and my teachers' personal productivity and professional practice. Williamson and Redish (2009) highlight the importance of Standard TF-V for us as educational technology leaders as they note that "...technology plays a vital role in transforming schools into professional learning communities. Helping others to use technology to enhance productivity and professional practice establishes additional responsibilities for technology facilitators and leaders" (p.101). During both the Seawinn Curriculum System training and the Operational and Building Management Technology training sessions, I listened critically to what

my teachers and staff were saying so that I could better understand the problems they have and identify ways that I could help each of them improve their practice. Listening critically is a key step towards getting to know the things that are important to each individual; Harris, Edmonson and Combs (2010) explain that “To understand what a person does and why, the leader has to know and understand things that are personal to that individual. Often, situations are not what they appear to be on the surface...” (p. 37). Listening critically is a new task that I perform based on my learning throughout my degree program.

During the Technology Director’s meeting, and again during the Seawinn Curriculum System training, the topic of student assessment came up, particularly in regards to connecting curriculum to assessment, including portfolio-based assessment. This topic is particularly relevant to my mission to improve instruction, as Solomon and Schrum (2007) remind us that “The challenge is to find ways to support in-depth learning and increased student achievement while also employing a variety of measures, including standardized tests” (p. 41).

While reflecting on the month’s summer technology upgrade planning and presentation activities, I gained a deeper understanding of Standard TF-VIII, Leadership and Vision, requiring me to contribute to the shared vision for campus integration of technology while fostering an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision. This particularly connects to my past learning regarding Performance Indicator TF-VIII.D, which requires me to lead in the development and evaluation of district technology planning and implementation; by planning the upgrades, and implementing that plan in concert with District needs and vision, I am contributing to the attainment of the vision.

My future learning has been impacted by my training session on operational technology; I have realized that maintenance and support personnel, who previously had little interaction

with technology beyond the Internet and email, are now required to use technology to control lighting, heating, air conditioning, backup generator systems, and many other systems that were previously mechanical in nature. I must learn new ways to support these people, who have little or no experience with technology and currently are very afraid of hurting something by entering the wrong command.

Viewing my performance on these tasks from an educator's point of view, I learned that my job will soon involve more teaching and less operating of technology; automated systems for maintenance workers, and new online curriculum and instruction management tools for teachers, will require me to deliver significantly more professional development, mentoring and modeling than I typically perform, straining my schedule. I have already begun working with our maintenance personnel, but my performance during these tasks was impacted by my lack of knowledge regarding the operation and use of their mechanical systems; this does, however, create a common ground as we are all in unfamiliar territory and must learn from each other. Based on these activities, I will take this knowledge to future contexts that I must begin learning how automated environmental and security control systems operate, and what their parameters are, in order to better support my Maintenance staff and in turn support instruction as it is difficult to learn if the room is too hot, too cold or if the doors don't lock and unlock properly.

As a learner, I gained new knowledge of automated control systems. I was effective as a learner because of my willingness to take on this challenge and learn about systems I previously considered outside my domain. I will transfer my learning to new situations as we add more operational technology and building management systems.

As a lifelong learner, I must perform further research regarding the role of online curriculum planning systems in assessment; right now my teachers tend to see curriculum and

assessment management systems as separate entities, and I know based on my learning throughout my degree program that I must help them understand the intimate link between assessment and curriculum planning if we are to meet District improvement goals.

References:

- Williamson, J. & Redish, T. (2009). *Technology Facilitation and Leadership Standards: What Every K-12 Leader Should Know and Be Able To Do*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Harris, S., Edmonson, S. & Combs, J. (2010). *Examining What We Do To Improve Our Schools: 8 Steps from Analysis to Action*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
- Solomon, G. & Schrum, L. (2007). *Web 2.0: New Tools, New Schools*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.